



PRINCESS DINNER GOWNS OF SILK AND SPANGLED NET.

WHAT WOMEN SAY AND DO

SIXTH ARTICLE IN THE SERIES BY
NOTEDED WORKERS OF THE WORLD.MISS DELEU TELLS HOW WOMEN ARE EDUCATED
AS AGRICULTURISTS IN BELGIUM,
AND SHOWS AN OPEN DOOR FOR
FARMERS' DAUGHTERS.

"There is no ancient gentlemen but gardeners, ditches and grave makers; they hold up Adam's profession," quoth the clown in "Hamlet"; but if that merry fellow were alive to-day he would find that Adam's profession had opened its doors to include women as well.

Following close upon the heels of the International Council of Women in London, when the subject of "Agriculture as a Profession for Women" elicited universal interest and respectful treatment at the hands of the London press, comes the annual meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, at Columbus, Ohio, where this same subject has again come up for discussion. A peculiar significance attaches to the fact that this meeting is the first ever held in this country in a college of agriculture, and that a fifth of the entire assembly are women, an acknowledgment, by the way, that "Adam's profession" has now become a recognized science.

At the London meeting Professor James Robertson, who has accomplished notable work in Canada, first as Dominion Dairy Commissioner and subsequently as Agricultural Commissioner, which post he still holds, showed that more than half the human race got their living directly or indirectly by agriculture—that is to say—by the cultivation of land for the production of food and of the raw materials for clothing. Women might, he considered, well take a larger interest and part in the occupation, in order to further advance the weal of the race, as well as the particular benefit of those now engaged therein. He, as a Canadian, advocated State aid for the overcomin of difficulties in farming, which were in reality difficulties of the State, and should not be left wholly to the weakness of even the strong individual.

In the light of this stimulated interest in the subject of the education of women as agriculturists, the following views given by Miss Florence Deleu, head mistress of the Normal Training School for Teachers in Bruges, Belgium; teacher of dairy work, and member of the National Society of Dairy Work, are timely and full of interest.

WOMEN AS AGRICULTURISTS.

Whatever position she may occupy in society, every woman has important duties to fulfil as housewife and mother of a family. But her sphere is not always limited to that. As far as it concerns the husband and provides for the necessities of his family, the collaboration of the wife often becomes useful and even necessary. On the other hand, a woman who is widowed and left alone must turn her thoughts to the necessity of earning a living for herself and her children. And the unmarried woman who would pass through life honorably is equally obliged to look after the responsibility of supporting many others, particularly in the middle classes, who are able to make their own living? Parents generally believe that their task is ended when they have paid for some years of boarding school for their daughters, and provided them with a marriage portion, which is often too small to attract young men. Brought up as they frequently are in relative luxury, accustomed to good food, to be waited upon and to dress well, how can they be expected to take up the heavy duties of a household or of earning their own livelihood, what is the become of these unhappy girls after their parents' death?

Still there are some exceptions. They will attempt to make the most of their little persons by tasteful dress; they will try to shine by their social talents or to please by a thousand little arts which the reading of novels has taught them. And with such a spirit of egotism, life and wages in the struggle for existence! Some will, perhaps get settled, establishing more such unhappy households as we see so many of these days. Others will follow an evil path, and fall precipitately into an abyss which they will be lost forever. And where does the greatest fault lie—with these unlucky girls, or with those who had charge of their bringing up?

Some sensible parents are trying to educate their daughters with a view to their future lives, and they anxiously ask themselves what boarding school will continue the work begun at home, and later on, when they and their girls such a life as will seem them a livelihood.

It must be admitted that up to the last few years little was done in Belgium for enabling girls to earn their living outside those duties of service, which the wives of governors, muses, teacher etc., necessarily entails. In France there are some prosperous printing offices which employ women exclusively, except for porters' and other menial work. Thus, the girls, who have had advanced studies where women may, without passing through the university, obtain instruction in physical and natural sciences, for which they often show a decided aptitude, made a start. A few months ago I visited the "Station de Femmes" (Depot for Seeds) in Zurich, Switzerland, where all the work done by women, who accompany the agents of the firm, is done by themselves to the towns it has spread since 1888 to the country districts in Württemberg."

It was established classes for agriculture, hygiene, and training of women for years. "Whatever may be said, we in Belgium are still under the influence of the New England idea, and the barbarous spirit of the Greeks and Romans to such an extent that we regard as illuminated spirits all those who work for the realization of the Christian ideal, which proclaims woman as man's equal, and which preaches that the master's equal from a spiritual point of view."

"Let us see what is going on in the domain of agriculture in Belgium.

THE ACTUAL POSITION OF FARMERS' WIVES

In the majority of smaller Belgian holdings the wife neglects her household occupations. The preparation of food generally leaves much to be desired, and the laws of hygiene are not observed, order and cleanliness are absent in the house, and the children are left to themselves. They are not taken care of physically; nobody troubles to do

WOMAN'S
REALM.

educated and developed in the schools, in which the teaching of trades is put above instruction in useful subjects."

Is it surprising to hear people go so far as to declare that education is hateful to farmers' daughters? The reason of this training they received was so harmful to them? So far from inculcating a love of agricultural life in them, the schools did not even give them an education, and along with them the girls, being as a rule ignorant of the utility of the various processes of scientific agriculture, most of the farmers' wives keep their hives back from the road, and are ignorant of the nature of the hygiene of man than that of the domestic animals; they are ignorant of the first principles of nutrition, they make ancient pranks, and the yard is in a neglected condition, and they do not attempt to heighten its productivity by rearing fowls of pure protein breeds. The kitchen garden, above all, is a sorry sight; it is full of weeds, and in a few varieties, instead of cultivated, so is the orchard, and they can make nothing of the bee-bee. Bookkeeping is unknown to them, and they consider it unnecessary.

The state of affairs, which is far from being exaggerated, existed among us ten years ago, and still exists in these days, but to a smaller extent, thanks to the establishment of technical schools of agriculture and schools of dairy work.

INSTRUCTION IN DAIRY WORK.

Government first of all made an effort to use the dairy industry as a branch of agriculture, which is the most important branch of agriculture in Belgium is together with the hands of women. The Minister of Agriculture, admirably seconded by M. Frost, the General Director of Agriculture; M. Detrevet, Inspector of Agriculture; M. D'Hondt, Director of the Laboratory, and a small number of other scientists has turned to two means of propaganda which logically supplement one another—lectures and schools of dairy work.

These courses comprise from six to fifteen consecutive lectures a month. The subjects treated are: the advantages of co-operative dairies, the feeding of cattle, stable hygiene, the composition of milk, different systems of skimming and churning, cream separation, etc. These lectures were well attended and produced excellent results.

The establishment of a temporary dairy school for a period of three months is generally granted at the request of the Agricultural Board, and the principal object of the school is to train the Parish and the Agricultural Board of the district.

Teaching is both practical and theoretical. Classes are held on even working days two hours being given to theory and two hours to practical work. All pupils are non-resident, and go home to their parents every evening. The maximum number of admission is limited sixteen pupils, the minimum being ten, and the tuition is free, pupils having merely to pay their own expenses such accessories as may be necessary for the classes.

CONDITIONS OF ADMISSION.

In order to be admitted to the school girls must fulfil the following conditions: They must be at least fifteen years of age.

They must possess a certificate of a good primary education.

They must engage in writing to attend the classes regularly and to undertake all work necessary to the management of a dairy (churning, skimming, cleaning, etc.).

In case more than sixteen girls ask for admission a competitive examination of the applicants takes place on the day of the opening of the school, so as to establish the right of priority of admission.

This examination is held on the spot, in the presence of the delegate of the Board, the director of the school and of the teacher of dairy work.

Every school of dairy work is under the supervision of delegates of the Board of Agriculture.

The school is directed by a director, who has charge of the classes of astronomy, care of cattle; he has the whole material organization of the school under him (principals, assistants, etc.), the teaching of milk, products, etc., etc.

He supervises the practical work, controls the regular working of apparatus and instruments; finally, the question of finance is in his hands, and the expenses of the dairy work are paid by the teachers of dairy work, who are women, and the pupils.

The teacher gives lessons in dairy work and housekeeping and to direct the practical work of the pupils.

There is a theoretical course of dairy work and cheese making, lectures on the care of cattle, etc., based on pastoral agriculture, and bookkeeping.

Practical classes are held daily. All pupils take their part in the work by turns; they are divided into four groups: the first group, the second, the third and the fourth, the third having the cheese, and the fourth has to clean the instruments and the premises.

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